

Changes designed to move stadium traffic

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Droves of drivers will again head to the silver dome on Glendale's west side as the Arizona Cardinals play their first pre-season game Aug. 18.

City officials say they'll be ready.

In the inaugural year at University of Phoenix Stadium, traffic gripes were common.

Second season improvements include one more exit off Loop 101, changes to traffic flow on side streets around the dome and more restaurants to keep fans entertained after the game, rather than all hopping into their cars in a mass exodus.

The biggest changes should come with the opening of a Bethany Home Road interchange from the north, city traffic engineer Debbie Albert said.

The Arizona Department of Transportation is finishing up the project, which will be ready for game day, Albert said.

This gives game-goers four options on and off Loop 101: Camelback and Bethany Home roads on the south side and Glendale and Northern avenues from the north.

The city also is planning to force traffic to move in specific directions on side streets. Fans leaving south of Maryland Avenue will be required to head south, while those exiting north of Maryland will be herded north.

"What we heard from people over and over again is that they always would prefer to keep moving even if they have to go a little out of their way," Albert said.

But one of the biggest relief valves for congestions may not come from road plans at all, but the opening of Westgate City Center.

When the season opened last year, not a single bar or restaurant was open within walking distance of the stadium. Now a handful of breweries and restaurants should attract fans before and after the game.

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